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SOCIALISTIC TENDENCIES IN AMERICAN TRADE-UNIONS

Trade-unionism and socialism are commonly assumed to be unrelated, if not antagonistic, movements. The president of the United Mine Workers of America, for example, states that

There is no fundamental or even necessary relationship between trade-unionism and socialism; they are entirely separate and distinct movements, one economic and the other political; and in some respects each movement accepts and recognizes a condition of society diametrically opposed to that recognized and accepted by the other.¹

Such statements as the above are made almost daily by capitalists, labor leaders, and politicians, and seem to be generally accepted without question.

Careful analysis of the two programmes, however, does not bear out popular belief. It seems to show, on the contrary, that at bottom trade-unionists and socialists hold to practically the same views and are seeking the same ends; and that it is only a question of time before trade-unionists in America will recognize this fact and lend their support to the Socialist Party. In support of this conclusion, it is proposed here to show that the most characteristic features of the Socialist movement are characteristic of trade-unionism also, and to furnish evidence that trade-unionists, as such, are coming more and more to indorse the Socialist programme.

Among the chief characteristics of a socialistic labor movement are the following: First, class-consciousness; second, a tendency to resort to political action for betterment of the social and economic condition of workers; third, a demand for collective ownership and administration of the means of production. How far are these features likewise characteristic of trade-unionism?

I. CLASS-CONSCIOUSNESS

The American Federation of Labor is at once the most powerful and the most conservative labor organization in

¹John Mitchell, "Trade-Unionism and Socialism," *Sunday Magazine*, February 24, 1907.

America. It has always been an anti-socialist anti-revolutionary body. Yet as early as 1897 President Gompers expressed what may be considered the attitude of the organization upon class-consciousness as follows:

The term class-consciousness indicates that those who belong to that class are conscious of the fact, and are conscious, too, that their interests as a class are separate and distinct from any other class; and that while by organizing in a class organization they may and do benefit all others, yet they organize in a class organization for the betterment of the conditions of that class. Class-conscious! as a matter of fact there is no other organization of labor in the entire world that is a class organization or is so class-conscious as are the trade-unions.²

Another of the more conservative labor leaders, President Mitchell of the United Mine Workers of America, states in the opening lines of his work, *Organized Labor*, that,

The average wage-earner has made up his mind that he must remain a wage-earner. He has given up the hope of a kingdom to come where he himself will be a capitalist and asks that the reward for his labor be given to him as a workingman.

If this does not mean that the workers are already class-conscious, it does mean that the conditions are present which will soon make them so.

Even stronger expressions of class-consciousness come from the rank and file almost daily. During the recent telegraphers' strike, for instance, meetings have been frequently held in Brand's Hall by the operators of Chicago. At these meetings speaker after speaker from various organizations has assured the strikers that, "Your fight is our fight. If you defeat the telegraph companies you will gain a victory for all organized labor." And the best proof that these speakers expressed the sentiments of their fellow unionists is the fact that their unions made liberal contributions to the telegraphers' strike fund. The same attitude has been taken by trade-unionists toward all great strikes in recent years. They have contributed liberally to help miners, printers, lithographers, and machinists, in their respective struggles for better conditions.

During the telegraphers' strike, referred to above, Presi-

² Editorial in *American Federationist*, August, 1897.

dent Small of the Commercial Telegraphers' Union of America, addressed the Chicago Federation of Labor. At this time he stated that it would be well for the American Federation of Labor to accumulate a defense fund of ten or twenty millions to be put at the disposal of any union engaged in a great strike. This proposition, which is based squarely upon the idea of a class struggle, was received with great applause by the three hundred or more delegates present.

The attitude of the unions toward arbitration is further evidence of growing class-consciousness. In the recent strike one of the most insistent demands of the operators has been that there should be no arbitration. The attitude of the telegraphers is noted here particularly because one would naturally expect such a union, if any, to be conservative. It is composed of relatively well-paid, skilled workers, whom one would expect strongly to indorse business unionism. President Hawley of the Switchmen's Union of North America indorses the attitude taken by the telegraphers. He says:

I am decidedly against arbitration of the telegraphers' strike or any other strike. Arbitration in every case means a loss to the union. The ideas of the men who compose boards of arbitration are those of the capitalistic class.

The President of the Chicago Federation of Labor likewise declared recently that he was strongly opposed to the arbitration of strikes. Of course this is not the sentiment of all trade-unionists, but there can be no doubt that it is that of an increasingly large share of them.

Class-consciousness is, perhaps, in no case demonstrated more strongly than it is in the sympathetic strike. When men in one craft, enjoying satisfactory conditions of employment, quit work to aid their union brothers in some entirely different craft, then there can be no question as to the existence of class-consciousness. Such strikes occur with great frequency, especially in the building trades. In some cases unionists find that to engage in a sympathetic strike they must break a definite agreement or contract with an employer. Even then they usually do not hesitate to stand by their brother unionists. As a general

rule when a trade-unionist faces the alternative of working with a "scab" or breaking a contract, he breaks a contract. His class-consciousness proves itself to be stronger than is his respect for the business code of honor.³ Many labor leaders, among whom may be mentioned the president of the Chicago Federation of Labor, now declare that trade-unions should not make any contracts whatever. Thus they would be entirely free to engage at any time in a sympathetic strike.

The existence and growth of class-consciousness among trade-unionists is a necessary and direct result of the conditions under which workers gain their livelihood. In an era of large production wage-earners have found that they can bargain to better advantage collectively than they can individually. They have found that they can, bargaining collectively, secure higher wages, shorter hours of labor, and better sanitary conditions in mine, mill, and factory. Hence they have organized into trade-unions. But that is not all. Wage-earners have found that they can further increase their strength by forming city, state, and national federations of trade-unions. Thus they have identified their interests not only with those of their fellow-craftsmen, but with those of their fellow-workers regardless of craft. When one union goes out on strike others feel the necessity of lending moral and financial assistance, even though they are not directly affected. They know from experience that in the near future they themselves may be forced to call upon their fellow-workers for help. They have found that if they fail to help one another they are unable to withstand the onslaughts of powerful capitalistic organizations. In a word, experience has taught trade-unionists the need of united action and mutual assistance.

While, however, practically all trade-unionists are class-conscious in the sense that they feel an identity of interests with fellow-workers, yet until recently few have indorsed the extreme position taken by such organizations as the Western Federa-

³ An explanation of this and other phases of the trade-union attitude mentioned here will be found in a paper written by Dr. R. F. Hoxie, "The Trade-Union Point of View," *Journal of Political Economy*, Vol. XV, No. 6, June, 1907.

tion of Miners, and the Industrial Workers of the World. These unions, with a membership of between 50,000 and 100,000, have officially recognized the "class struggle," and have declared that there can be no lasting peace between capitalists and wage-workers.

During the past few years, however, the radical class spirit of the western labor unionists has been spreading to other parts of the country. This has been due chiefly to agitation occasioned by prosecution of the officers of the Western Federation of Miners for murder of the late Governor Steunenberg of Idaho, and to the activity of employers' associations in fighting certain phases of trade-unionism. During the past year the attention of all organized labor has been turned to the trial of the officers. Meetings have been held in all large cities and industrial centers to raise funds and to arouse sympathy for the prisoners. These meetings, which have been generally promoted by socialists, have reached thousands of trade-unionists who had hitherto looked upon the labor problem as a craft, rather than a class, problem. In New York City, alone, over three hundred unions contributed to the defense fund for the prisoners. All told, over \$100,000 was raised, most of it coming from unions scattered throughout the country.

The socialist press has made the most of this opportunity to create a strong feeling of class-consciousness among workers. One of the most radical and widely circulated of the socialist weeklies, for instance, has devoted more than half its space during the past year to the trial of Haywood, and has, moreover, furnished accounts of the trial to dozens of labor papers throughout the country.

It is not in order here to pass upon the merits of the Haywood case, but simply to point out how it tended to promote a class-conscious spirit among trade-unionists. The labor press, especially the socialistic element, represented the case as an attempt of the capitalistic class to crush out of existence a strong labor union by brutal and illegal methods. That this statement had considerable effect upon even the more conservative unions is shown by the fact that such an organization as the

United Mine Workers of America contributed \$5,000 to the defense fund. Indeed, it is a matter of common knowledge that this trial tended to break down the barriers between labor organizations in all parts of the country. Trade-unionists and socialists in industrial centers united to form Haywood, Moyer, and Pettibone conferences. As a result of this co-operation in a common cause unionists and socialists are much more in sympathy with each other today than they were two years ago.

A much more potent factor making for radicalism has been the aggressive action of employers' associations. From 1903 to 1905 employers' associations and citizens' alliances made vigorous attacks upon certain practices of American trade-unions. They declared that unions must give up the union shop, the sympathetic strike, restriction of output, and the boycott. The chief issue was the union shop. In Chicago, San Francisco, Dayton, Battle Creek, and in many other cities the fight over this issue was a bitter one. Unions in all parts of the country became aroused. The labor press declared that unionism was facing a crisis, and that for self-protection unionists must stand shoulder to shoulder. As a result of these widespread and bitter conflicts unions soon developed a class spirit which they had never before felt. The very organization of powerful employers' associations to combat the demands of unionism made unionists feel that they were engaged in a class struggle. They lost faith in the doctrine of identity of interests between employer and employee and have since expected to gain concession by force only.

The resolution passed at a recent convention of the National Manufacturers' Association in New York City, to raise \$1,500,000 in the next three years "To federate the manufacturers of the country to effectively fight industrial oppression," has merely further aroused the fighting spirit of trade-unionists. President Perkins of the Cigar Makers' Union has made the following declaration:

Every labor organization should immediately start collecting a war fund of its own, not for the purpose of fighting fair manufacturers, but to offset any move the Parry-Post-Van Cleave combine may make against

us. . . . The time for peace in so far as the Van Cleave outfit is concerned it past. Let labor meet this crowd with its own weapons.

President Lynch of the International Typographical Union expresses the opinion that,

With \$1,500,000 in the strong-box of the National Manufacturers' Association, and with \$5,000,000, \$10,000,000, yes, even \$20,000,000 in the coffers of the American Federation of Labor and its units, the international and national trade-unions of the North American continent, "industrial oppression" will become a very different quantity and will be "fought" on very different lines.

Secretary-Treasurer Skemp of the Brotherhood of Painters, Paperhangers, and Decorators expresses himself as follows:

If the opposition decides to raise an immense industrial war fund, if there is to be a general combination of employers to crush out trade-unionism, if evolution must give place to revolution, we shall be compelled to meet the issue, but it will not be on the initiative or with the consent of American trade-unionism; the responsibility will lie entirely with the American business man.

Another note is sounded by President Hawley of the Switchmen's Union of North America,

Van Cleave says nothing of the trusts which are daily making fortunes for a few individuals through the hard labor of the wage-slave; but he bitterly attacks the trade-unions which only aim to secure the emancipation of the wage-slave.⁴

As one observes the increasingly warlike attitude taken by employers' associations and trade-unions, one is forced to conclude that the day of business unionism is rapidly passing.

That many far-seeing capitalists and labor leaders recognize this fact is shown by the attitude taken by civic federations and other associations formed for the avoidance and settlement of labor disputes. From the outset they have opposed the attacks of employers' associations upon unions, declaring that such attacks can result only in making the labor movement more radical. The *Wall Street Journal* well expressed this view recently when it commented as follows upon the decision of the

⁴For the full opinion of these and other labor leaders regarding the attitude taken by the National Manufacturers' Association, see the *American Federationist*, September, 1907.

National Manufacturers' Association to raise a "war fund" of \$1,500,000,

It were better to adopt the suggestion of Secretary Strauss and invite the leaders of organized labor to meet with the manufacturers for joint consultation and action. Co-operation, not war, should be the programme.

It seems hardly necessary to adduce more evidence in proof of the assertion that in the industrial field trade-unionists are thoroughly class-conscious. In this respect, at least, they are essentially socialistic.

2. POLITICAL ACTION

Since its organization in 1881 the American Federation of Labor has consistently advised its members to use their ballots regardless of party ties to secure social and economic advantages. Until recent years these resolutions have never been taken seriously, and have had little or no effect upon the course of current politics. Indeed, in so far as the unions have taken any positive stand as unions, it has been to taboo political action altogether. "Keep politics out of the union, and the union out of politics!" has been until recently the shibboleth of union leaders generally.

In the summer of 1906, however, the Executive Council of the Federation took a decisive step toward independent political action. They declared that,

Congressmen and senators in their frenzied rush after the almighty dollar have been indifferent or hostile to the rights of man. They have had no time and as little inclination to support the reasonable labor measures which we have urged, and which contained beneficent features for all our people without an obnoxious provision to anyone. We recommend that central bodies and local unions proceed without delay to the election of delegates to meet in conference or convention to formulate plans to further the interests of this movement, and in accordance with the plan herein outlined, at the proper time and in the proper manner, nominate candidates who will unquestionably stand for the enactment into law of labor and progressive measures.⁵

The following recommendations were then made:

1. Defeat all who have been hostile or indifferent to the demands of labor.

⁵ See *American Federationist*, 1906, p. 530.

2. If both parties ignore the demands of labor, a straight labor candidate should be nominated.

3. The men who have shown themselves to be friendly to labor should be supported and no candidate nominated against them.

To carry out his policy the Executive Council appointed a "Labor Representation Committee" composed of three leading officials of the Federation, and contributions were solicited with which to carry on the campaign.

This move marked a distinct advance over the "resolution" stage toward the active participation of American trade-unions, as such, in politics. The president of the Federation and several other labor leaders took an active part in the congressional campaign of 1906, notably in an effort to defeat certain representatives from Maine, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Illinois.

While the labor campaign of 1906 brought little direct result, it was, nevertheless, significant in that the unions actually got into the political arena. As the president of the Federation remarked, this was only the beginning. The Federation has given every indication that it will take an active part in future political campaigns along lines suggested above. In this connection it may be well to note that with the increasing class-consciousness in the industrial field, unions will be better able to participate successfully in politics. So long as loyalty to party is greater than loyalty to class the entrance of unions into politics can lead only to confusion, if not disruption. But when unionists stand together and vote as members of a class, there will be much less danger of ruptures.

A noteworthy example of the entrance of American trade-unions into politics is afforded by the city of Milwaukee, where the unions and the Socialist Party are practically co-operating. Of the twelve Socialist aldermen in the city council, five are members of trade-unions; of five Socialist supervisors, four are members of trade-unions; of six Socialist members of the state legislature, four are members of trade-unions. In the words of the state secretary of the Socialist Party of Wisconsin, in that state, "The trade-union movement is the economic wing, and the Socialist Party the political wing of the labor movement."

Another fact showing the tendency of trade-unionists to co-operate with socialists in the political field is brought out in the following statement from the national secretary of the Socialist Party:

Of the 275 congressional candidates nominated by the Socialist Party in the last election (1906) more than 65 per cent. held membership cards in trades organizations, and a large percentage of the balance were men engaged in occupations where no unions exist.

When trade-unionists do not support the socialists, they generally favor the next most radical candidate. In the New York gubernatorial campaign of 1906, for example, the Democratic candidate, Mr. Hearst, received a large part of his support from the trade-unions. Union after union indorsed his candidacy, and several unionists were put upon the stump by his campaign managers.

It is a significant fact that many prominent labor leaders are now urging their followers to strike at the ballot-box. They go beyond the position taken by the executive council of the American Federation of Labor, and say that this is the only solution of the labor problem. Among those who have lately taken that position is President Small of the Commercial Telegraphers' Union. He has declared to the striking telegraphers that

One man at the polls is worth a dozen men on picket duty. This fight [between wage-workers and capitalists] will go on as long as capitalism exists, and right voting is the only thing that will win a permanent victory.

One may ask why trade-unionists are now beginning to favor independent political action. Doubtless there are many contributing causes, but the chief factors seem to be these: (a) Failure of the trade-union lobbies at Washington and at the state capitols; (b) Political activity of employers' associations; (c) Privation and loss incidental to strikes; (d) Success in politics of foreign trade-unions; (e) Socialist agitation.

The effects of these forces can be clearly traced. In the resolutions of the executive council of the American Federation of Labor, quoted above, and upon many other occasions trade-unionists have expressed their dissatisfaction with the

treatment which they have received at the hands of our legislatures. They claim that their demands have been ignored and their bills pigeon-holed. At the same time the lobby of the employers' associations seems to have been remarkably successful. Ex-President Parry of the National Manufacturers' Association claims that it was largely through his efforts that the eight-hour legislation and anti-injunction bills advocated by the labor leaders failed of passage. Under these circumstances labor leaders seem to feel that if they cannot meet employers on equal terms at the lobby, they should appeal directly to the voters. Thus they hope to secure representatives in our legislatures pledged to support labor measures.

It has been well said that every strike is a socialist opportunity. Then it is that wage-earners feel most keenly the conflict with capitalists. And then it is that they are most ready to listen to any measure which promises to curtail the employers' power. This is especially true if the workers are forced to endure the privation of a long and bitter struggle. At the time of the anthracite coal strike of 1902, for instance, the socialist vote in Pennsylvania increased several hundred per cent. It is said also that the strike at the Chicago packing-houses in 1904 was directly responsible for the election of two socialists to the Illinois state legislature.

It is difficult to say to what extent the success of working-men in politics abroad has affected the attitude of American trade-unionists. But when the Independent Labor Party sent twenty-nine representatives to the English Parliament a deep impression was made upon American unionists. In other European countries, notably France and Germany, working-men have long supported strong socialist parties. As, however, conditions are quite different in those countries from those prevailing in the United States, the example has not appealed with especial force to American wage-earners. The success in politics of the working-men in Australia and New Zealand has not been without effect. In the former country, after the employers had practically destroyed the trade-unions, the workers resorted to independent political action. They now hold the balance of power

there, as in New Zealand, and have succeeded in passing many of their important measures. Moreover, as times goes on, the labor party in those countries is becoming increasingly socialistic.

Finally, the trade-union offers a peculiarly favorable field for the socialist agitator. Every union meeting affords a forum. In the course of time half a dozen intelligent socialists will leaven a whole union. It is true that many unions have constitutional provisions barring the discussion of politics; but the socialists can get in their work without even mentioning politics or the word socialism. Moreover, trade-unionists are much more willing to listen to the socialists today than they were five or ten years ago. At the meeting recently held by the striking telegraphers at Chicago, no speakers were more warmly received than the socialists who frequently addressed them.

Thus we see how many forces are operating to bring trade-unionists to united and independent political action. Hitherto one of the chief distinctions made between trade-unionism and socialism has been that the former was purely economic, while the latter was political. If American trade-unions continue getting into politics this distinction will eventually lose most of its force here as it has done already in England and in several other countries.

3. COLLECTIVE OWNERSHIP

The third and most distinctive characteristic of a socialistic labor movement is a demand for co-operative ownership and operation of the means of production and distribution. Has this idea been getting any foothold in American unions?

In recent years the socialist delegates have always been more or less prominent in the convention of the American Federation of Labor. They have usually endeavored to pass resolutions favorable to collective ownership of the means of production, but have never been entirely successful. The strength of the socialists in these conventions can be judged fairly well by the fact that in 1905 representatives of about 214,000 members voted for socialistic resolutions, while representatives of 1,128,000 voted against them. This was certainly a very large

majority for the anti-socialists, but it should not be overlooked that the vote indicates that about 20 per cent. of the trade-unionists are socialists. Socialism has, it appears, been making much greater headway among trade-unionists than among the rest of the population. For if 20 per cent. of all citizens in the United States should vote the Socialist ticket, the party would poll about 3,000,000 votes.

Several conventions of state federations of labor have officially declared for collective ownership and operation of the means of production and distribution. Such resolutions were passed as early as 1900 by the Wisconsin State Federation of Labor; in 1901 by the Michigan State Federation of Labor; in 1902 by the Iowa State Federation of Labor; and in 1903 by the Minnesota State Federation of Labor.

Similar resolutions have been passed in recent years by the central federated unions of New York, Cleveland, St. Louis, Milwaukee, Columbus, Erie, Wilkesbarre, Haverhill, Brockton, Terre Haute, and in many other cities. Of course this does not necessarily mean that even a majority of the trade-unionists in these cities are socialists. But it does mean that at the times when these resolutions were passed at least a majority of the delegates representing the unions of the city were socialists.

In the last decade several national and international unions have officially indorsed the socialist programme by resolution, constitutional provision, or otherwise. Among these are the following:

International Association of Machinists	48,000 members
Pattern Makers' League	9,000
United Metal Workers	22,000
Boilermakers and Iron Ship Builders	14,000
Amalgamated Engineers	2,000
United Brewery Workmen	39,000
Bakery and Confectionary Workers	14,000
Boot and Shoe Workers	32,000
Textile Workers	10,000
Ladies Garment Workers	1,800
United Cloth Hat and Cap Makers	3,000
Woodworkers	20,000
Flint Glass Workers	10,000

Amalgamated Glass Workers	2,800
Carriage and Wagon Workers	3,200
Western Unions, including W. F. of Miners..	100,000
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Total	330,800

While all these unions have indorsed socialism in one way or another, it does not follow that a majority of the members in every case are socialists. In fact, the secretaries of some of these unions have stated that their unions cannot be considered socialistic organizations. Delegates of such unions sometimes pass socialistic resolutions one year which are repudiated by another group of delegates the following year. As a general rule, however, any union which has passed socialistic resolutions in the past six or eight years may be looked upon as favorably disposed to socialism.

There are many unions having a large proportion of socialists which have never passed socialistic resolutions. Among these may be mentioned the Cigarmakers with 45,000 members, the Printers with 47,000 members, and the Carpenters with about 145,000 members. Over a third of the Cigarmakers are socialists. The proportion in the other two organizations is probably not so large.

Aside from noting the passage of socialistic resolutions there are several other ways by which one may judge the growth of sentiment favorable to collectivism among trade-unions. We can learn much, for example, from the opinions of labor leaders, the attitude of the trade-union press, and the general support which unions are giving the Socialist Party.

The editor of the *Switchmen's Journal* states, for instance, that judging from personal observation and the correspondence which he receives from members, there is a strong tendency toward socialism in the Switchmen's Union (about 15,000 members). The secretary of the Brotherhood of Painters, Paperhangers, and Decorators (65,000 members) states that there is a marked tendency toward socialism in that organization. The opinion of the secretary of the Bricklayers and Masons Union is that in his organization (68,000 members)

“there is a very large growing sentiment favorable to many of the ideas that are advocated by the socialists as a party.”

One of the best indications of the growth of socialistic sentiment in trade-unions is the attitude taken by their official journals and newspapers. A decade ago, not only were there few union papers advocating socialism, but there were relatively few which would print socialistic articles and communications. Today all this is changed. Nearly all the union magazines and papers will print articles and letters for or against socialism, and a growing number advocate the socialist solution of the labor problem. Among the union papers which openly advocate socialism may be mentioned the following:

1. *The Cleveland Citizen*. Owned and controlled by the United Trades and Labor Council, Cleveland, Ohio.
2. *The Labor World*. Organ of the Trades Assembly, Columbus, Ohio.
3. *Labor*. Indorsed by the unions of St. Louis.
4. *The Toiler*. Indorsed by Central Labor Union, Terre Haute, Indiana.
5. *The Social Democratic Herald*. Official journal of Milwaukee Trades Council, and the Wisconsin State Federation of Labor.
6. *Union Labor Journal*. Indorsed by Central Labor Union, Erie, Pennsylvania.
7. *Central Union Times*. Indorsed by unions of Jacksonville, Florida.
8. *The Laborer*. Indorsed by unions of Dallas, Texas.
9. *The Crisis*. Organ of Salt Lake City unions and the Utah State Federation of Labor.
10. *The People's Paper*. Indorsed by the unions of Santa Barbara, California.
11. *The Brewers' Journal*. Owned and conducted by the National Brewery Workers' Union, Cincinnati, Ohio.
12. *Bakers' Journal*. Owned and conducted by National Bakers' Union, Chicago.
13. *The Glass Worker*. Organ of the Amalgamated Glass Workers, Chicago.
14. *The Miners' Magazine*. Owned and conducted by the Western Federation of Miners, Denver, Colorado.

Other national organs, such as the *Machinists' Journal*, *The Painter and Decorator*, and the *Switchmen's Journal*, incline strongly toward socialism.

Aside from these official organs of local and national unions there are a large number of socialist papers which receive much

of their support from trade-unionists. For instance, about 550 local unions have subscribed to the *Appeal to Reason*, a radical socialist weekly, to be delivered to each of their members, or a total of over 40,000 individual subscriptions. The same paper probably has upon its list at least as many more individual trade-unionist subscribers.

A large part of the stock sold to equip the *Chicago Daily Socialist* was purchased by local trade-unions, as unions. In the same way the unions of New York are supplying fully one-half of the funds with which to start a local socialist daily. The fact that trade-unionists are giving such extensive support to socialist papers shows that they are becoming increasingly favorable to socialistic ideas.

Not only in purchasing their literature but in other more direct ways trade-unionists are aiding the socialists. The Brewers' Union, for instance, contributed \$500 to the campaign fund of the Socialist Party in the last national election. Local unions in all parts of the country frequently contribute to socialist campaign funds. Indeed, the organizer of the Socialist Party in New York City states that not only are at least 60 per cent. of the local dues-paying members of the party trade-unionists, but that the party receives 35 per cent. of its annual campaign funds in contributions from trade-unions. These facts are all the more remarkable when we consider that trade-unions seldom, if ever, contribute to other political parties.

All these facts, the passage of socialistic resolutions, the opinions of labor leaders, the attitude of the trade-union organs, and the general assistance which trade-unions are giving the Socialist Party, show that American trade-unionists are inclining more and more toward the collectivist programme.

The causes for the favorable attitude of trade-unionists toward collectivism are rooted deep in modern economic conditions. The majority of trade-unionists are manual laborers. Of course more or less intelligence and skill are required in their work, but as a rule they deal with physical forces and physical products. They work with visible, tangible things. In factory, mine, and mill the process of production apparently

consists solely in the application of physical force to material objects. Few trade-unionists have anything to do with the investment and management of capital, or with the marketing of products. Hence they usually fail to see how these activities have any connection with the actual production of commodities.

The present-day middle-class philosophy of rights generally recognizes the act of production as the ultimate source of property rights. All wealth belongs to the producer thereof. When trade-unionists more or less consciously apply this philosophy to modern productive processes, they begin to feel that they, the producers of physical goods, should get the entire product of the establishment. They cannot see that the capitalist renders any productive services, and hence they cannot understand how he is entitled to any share of the product.

Of course relatively few wage-earners consciously formulate any of these propositions. Nevertheless the great majority of working-men hold to such views more or less strongly. Regarding millionaires, for example, no expression is more common among wage-earners than that, "they got rich off our labor." One cannot discuss the distribution of wealth with the average trade-unionist for five minutes without hearing this sentiment expressed in some form or other. Indeed, so strongly is this idea rooted in the minds of the workers that several trade-unions have inserted it in the preambles to their constitutions. In the preamble to the constitution of the Bricklayers' Union, for instance, one reads that, "The trend of employers, assisted by combined capital, is to debase labor and deny it its lawful and just share of what it produces;" in the preamble to the constitution of the International Association of Machinists it is stated to be "The natural right of those who toil to enjoy to the fullest possible extent the wealth created by their labor;" the preamble to the constitution of the Iron Molders' Union declares that, "Under the present social system there is a general tendency to deny the producer the full reward of his industry and skill." Some unions especially in the West have made even more radical assertions.

These quotations illustrate a very general attitude among

trade-unionists. They feel that the capitalist is more or less of a parasite living upon wealth produced by others. He is a fifth wheel in the industrial mechanism. He does nothing but extract profits. Hence unionists naturally favor an industrial system in which there will be no capitalists, and the entire economic output will be divided among the workers.

Not only do trade-unionists want a larger share of the economic output, they are also striving to gain greater control over the conditions under which they work. This is apparent in their agitation for the union shop, shorter hours of labor, better sanitary conditions, and protection against dangerous machinery. They usually seek to gain their end in two ways—directly from the employer and indirectly through the state. In so far as the resort to the state—and they are doing so more and more freely—the unions will find themselves in close relations with the socialists, with whom they will undoubtedly find it advantageous to co-operate.

Indeed, socialists go but a short step beyond trade-unionists when they demand co-operative ownership and operation of the means of production and distribution. Both trade-unionist and socialist believe that the wage-earner should secure a larger share of the wealth produced, and that he should have greater control over the conditions of his employment. The socialist maintains that the co-operative ownership and control of capital by the workers is the best if not the only means of attaining these ends. Apparently trade-unionists are coming to be more and more disposed to indorse the socialist position.

The evidence cited above seems to show quite conclusively that unionism and socialism are fundamentally associated. In a paper of this kind it is necessary to treat the subject somewhat dogmatically. The tendencies are, however, undoubtedly as described. American trade-unions are becoming more class-conscious; they are going into politics; and they are beginning to demand collective ownership and management of capital.

Some unions manifest these tendencies less markedly than others, but the general tendency is unmistakable. In view of these facts the writer feels that it is not rash to predict that in

the course of a few years the situation now prevailing in Wisconsin will become general throughout the United States. "The trade-union movement will be the economic wing, and the Socialist Party the political wing of the labor movement."

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